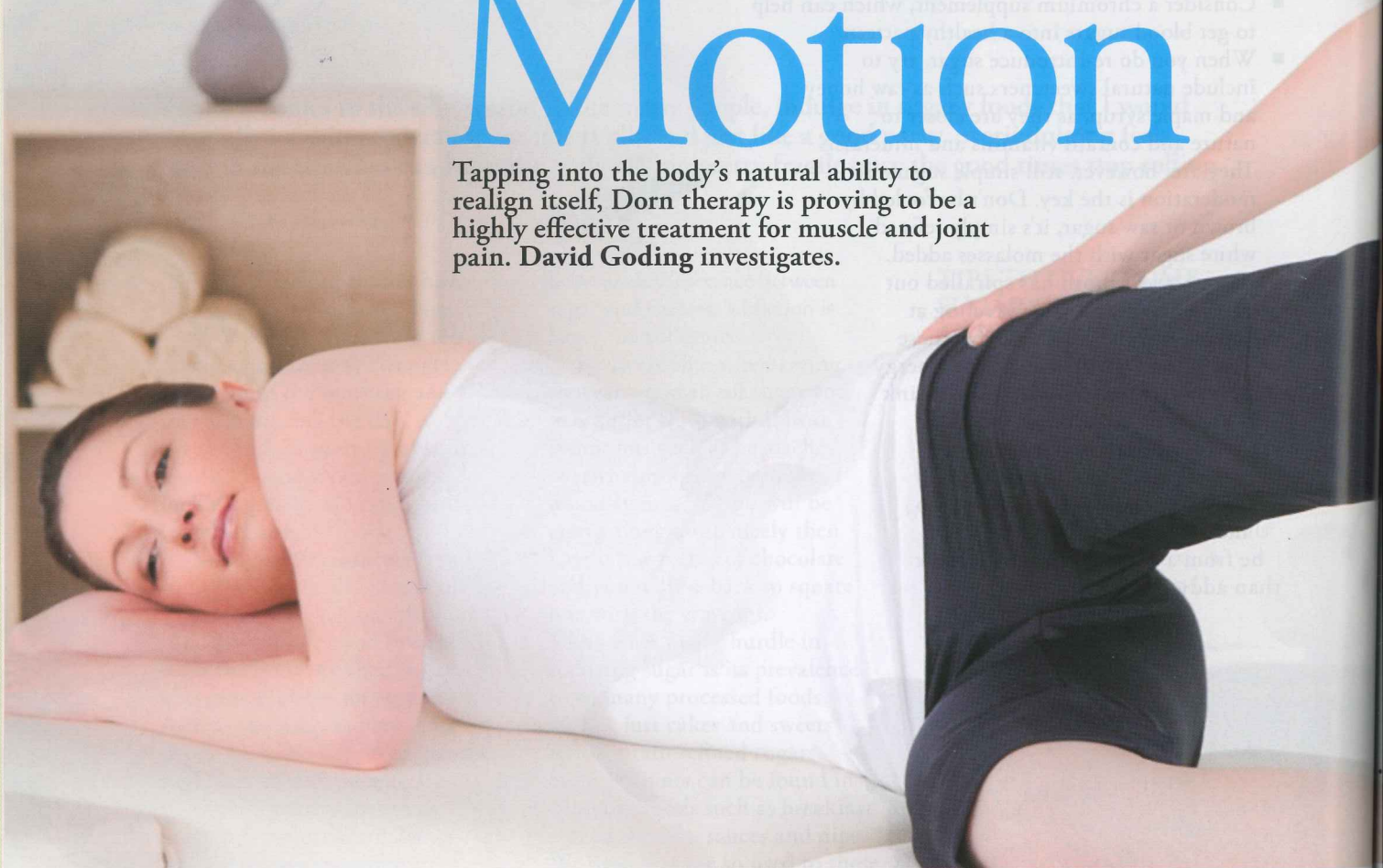


# Body in Motion

Tapping into the body's natural ability to realign itself, Dorn therapy is proving to be a highly effective treatment for muscle and joint pain. David Goding investigates.



Uniquely performed while the body is in motion, Dorn therapy sessions are interactive – often, the client takes away techniques they can use at home to treat themselves with, if and when pain resurfaces.

“It attracts a lot of people because of its simplicity,” says Dr Jason Mallia, musculoskeletal therapist and director of Integrative Health. “It’s easy to apply and easy to understand.”

“Day to day you might get up and go for a walk and hear the odd pop or click as your body readjusts itself, just from adjusting your posture and moving. Dorn

therapy takes these same principles and gives it a little helping hand,” continues Dr Mallia.

“It’s about realigning the body so it can move naturally and freely and in doing so, you relieve the pain.”

Back pain is the most common condition treated with Dorn therapy, but it can also be used effectively to treat a wide range of other painful complaints, including scoliosis, leg and hip pain and even headaches.

## WHAT IS DORN THERAPY?

The techniques used in Dorn therapy were developed in unusual

circumstances by German farmer, Dieter Dorn, in the 1980s.

Seeking out a treatment for his back pain, he came across another farmer who was doing a particular type of treatment which the farmer didn’t have a name for. The old guy fixed his back pain but when he asked to be taught the technique he simply replied ‘you know it already’.

“Some years later his wife developed back pain and he went back to the old man, but he had passed away. So Dorn developed the technique from what he could remember, simple laws of physics and movement and eventually brought it into the mainstream.



THINKSTOCK

Today, Dorn therapy is widespread in Germany, where it is practised by many medical doctors, and has spread throughout the world. In Australia the practice has been growing steadily for the last 10 years.

Dieter Dorn died in January 2011. In his final years, Dorn explored the idea of using music and sound to positively influence the realignment of the spine.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Dorn therapy is a simple, non-invasive, musculoskeletal method of realignment.

“The realignments involve no cracking or sudden forcing of any

joints,” explains Dr Mallia. “It’s very gentle and allows the body’s own natural movements to realign the body with some pressure put on different parts of the body by the practitioner.

“The basic principle of Dorn is that you apply pressure into a joint that does a certain action. For instance, your wrist moves, flexes and rotates, so you apply pressure into the joint while it has some movement. Or if we were concentrating on the hips, we would get the person to move the hips while we’re putting pressure into the hip joint itself. With the pressure into the joint there seems

## INTEGRATIVE

HEALTH

Many practitioners use an integrative approach, which incorporates Dorn therapy with other modalities such as osteopathy, chiropractic and shiatsu.

To find a Dorn therapist near you go to [www.dmaa.info](http://www.dmaa.info)

to be a shift in the body fluids in the joint and a release of gases and a realignment occurs.”

One of the main areas of focus for Dorn therapy, regardless of where the symptoms of pain occur, is leg length.

“A lot of people have irregular leg length,” says Dr Mallia. “It’s actually rare to have a back problem where there’s no leg length discrepancy.

“Leg length balancing is an integral part of the treatment. You’ve got to do that otherwise you’ll find that the foundations are not set. You start with the lower leg then the hips which in turn can influence the spine and the upper body as well.”

### WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

Dorn therapy can potentially treat any painful condition or symptom that involves muscle or joint pain.

“Back pain is probably the most common thing we treat with Dorn,” says Dr Mallia.

“Scoliosis too, is very treatable, especially if it is functional rather than congenital. Functional scoliosis, which is developed in a person’s lifetime and is often accompanied by muscle imbalances, responds very well to Dorn.”

Dorn therapy is also commonly used to treat leg, hip and neck pain as well as for headaches and eye and ear problems, which can be the result of nerve pressure on the spine around the cervical vertebrae at the top of the spine.

It has also had great success in treating women who have experienced the physical trauma of birth combined with the spinal

stress of carrying their child for some time afterwards.

### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

After an initial discussion of your medical history and any symptoms you may be experiencing, your practitioner will check various joints in your body, working from the legs up towards the neck.

"We check leg balance, hips, and we move up the entire spine," explains Dr Mallia. "The techniques used are not painful, although you do need to be careful if someone has acute pain. You always work away from the pain.

"Essentially, it's the body being taken through its normal movement with a bit of pressure."

During the first part of a typical session, the patient lies on their back while the practitioner works on the cause of the problem, such as the hip, ankle or knee. The lower body is usually treated while in a horizontal position.

Then the patient stands up and may be instructed to swing one leg gently backwards and forwards while the practitioner works on the lower back, working up one vertebra at a time. When the patient is swinging the left leg, pressure is applied to the right side of the back and when swinging the right leg, pressure is applied to left side.

This is followed by the patient sitting down and a similar pattern is repeated with the upper body, swinging first the left arm then the right, while the practitioner works on the middle and upper back. Finally, the patient turns their head from left to right as the practitioner works on the neck region.

"It's different from chiropractic and osteopathy where there is gapping of the joint or high velocity thrusting the joint back into place," says Dr Mallia. "With Dorn the realignments involve no cracking or sudden forcing of any joints. It's extremely gentle."

The practitioner may also give you some exercises to take home with you.

"Nine times out of ten there's a movement, a technique that a person can do for themselves that mimics what the practitioner has done," says Dr Mallia. "The self-help exercises are what speed up the healing process."

### WHAT IS BREUSS MASSAGE?

Often accompanying Dorn therapy is a form of massage called Breuss.

"Breuss is unique because it's purely focused on the spine and uses stretching strokes to help gap the joints," says Dr Mallia. "It's also unique because it uses St Johns Wort, or hypericum, which works on the nervous system, relaxing any inflamed nerves or

### RUDOLF BREUSS

Breuss massage was developed by Rudolf Breuss, a controversial Austrian natural healer who also developed a theory that cancer could be cured through a high consumption of vegetable juices and tea.

nerves that are actually causing muscles to contract.

"Then it uses a thin piece of paper to draw the oils back out of the spine once the treatment is done, which is designed to detox the body by capturing some of the toxins and absorbing them into the paper."

It's also a wonderfully relaxing way to end your Dorn therapy session. **NH**

